

NEPA Categorical Exclusion Checklist

For projects categorically excluded under NEPA, document that there are no extraordinary circumstances related to the proposed action that warrant further analysis and documentation in an environmental assessment or environmental impact statement.

Forest, District: Klamath National Forest, Salmon and Scott River Ranger District

Project Name: Salmon-August Complex Reforestation

Project Leader: Kelsey Flathers Environmental Coordinator: Danika Carlson

Location Description (District, Distance to Nearest Town): Salmon and Scott River Ranger District, about 5 miles northwest of Sawyers Bar, CA and is within the Cherry Creek and Specimen Creek drainages of the Salmon River Watershed.

Legal Description: Township (T) 41 North (N), Range (R) 12 West (W), Sections 25-27 and 35-36; T41N, R11W Section 31; T40N, R11W Section 6-7; T40N, R12W Sections 1 and 12 (Mount Diablo Meridian).

Gross acres (project area): 1,093 Net Acres (actual ground disturbance): 155

Project Purpose: The purpose of the project is to facilitate reforestation and reduce fuel loading on National Forest System lands burned during the Wallow Fire (part of the Salmon-August Complex). These activities will promote the establishment of desired conifers in existing plantations and natural stands lost during the fire. Retaining and promoting growth of Late Successional Reserve habitat will require both the protection and maintenance of the existing stands of late-successional forest as well as managing young stands for the development of future late-successional habitats. Remaining live conifers are present at stocking densities less than desirable for the area to naturally regenerate. The proposed treatments will aid the establishment of native conifer diversity and forest cover within the burned plantations and natural stands. It will also reduce the amount of hazardous fuels created by fire-related mortality. This project will maintain, protect, and eventually restore conditions of late-successional and old growth forest ecosystems, which serve as habitat for associated wildlife. Treatments designed in this project contribute to these habitat conditions and support the objectives of the LSR.

Proposed Action: The proposed action was designed to meet the purpose and need for action. The proposed action will treat about 155 acres within the 1,093 acre project area. The Forest has evaluated site-preparation needs on acres proposed for replanting. Determining factors for selecting these acres for planting consisted of vegetation burn severity, aspect, site potential, competing vegetation, location on the landscape, potential for natural regeneration, and Land and Resource Management Plan allocation.

The proposed treatments include about 94 acres of site preparation activities and planting (including 45 acres within Inventoried Released Roadless Areas) and about 61 acres of planting without site preparation for a total of 155 treated acres.

Site Preparation (94 acres)

Site preparation to reduce fuel loading and prepare the area for planting would be accomplished by a combination of cutting and handpiling of small diameter conifers and hardwoods (less than 12" dbh) and brush as well as subsequent burning of piles. Additional activities may also include slashing of standing dead material (less than 15" dbh) as necessary. Brush and dead and dying trees will be removed to prepare the site for planting. Where they exist, healthy conifers and hardwoods will be left on site. The proposed actions for site preparation are listed in the examples in 36 CFR 220.6(e)(5)(ii), "*Regeneration of an area to native trees species, including site preparation that does not involve the use of herbicides or result in vegetation type conversion. Planting trees or mechanical seed dispersal of native tree species following a fire, flood, or landslide.*"

Planting (155 acres)

Tree planting (reforestation) would occur by hand methods, using either bare root or container stock. Within treatment stands, planting would only take place in those areas previously stocked with conifers. Since the terrain is very rocky and

contains numerous sites that cannot be planted, reforestation by hand will provide for the desired spatial variability within treatment stands and across the project area. Tree species used for planting will roughly correspond with historical stand composition, varying by forest type. An average of 220-300 trees per acre will be planted. Additional planting survival techniques may be used to increase survival of planted trees. These techniques include, but are not limited to: hand grubbing (to release for survival), vexar tubing for browse prevention, and shade blocks for improved microsite conditions. The proposed actions for planting are listed in 36 CFR 220.6(e)(5)(ii), "*Regeneration of an area to native tree species, including site preparation that does not involve the use of herbicides or result in vegetation type conversion. Planting trees or mechanical seed dispersal of native tree species following a fire, flood, or landslide.*"

Access

Access for this project will be accomplished by use of roads on the National Forest Transportation System.

Table 1. Acres of treatment types.

Site prep, plant, and grub	
Unit Number	Acres
449-30	45
449-10	9
449-14	40
Total	94
Plant and grub only	
Unit Number	Acres
450-40	61
Total	61

Table 2. Treatment type overlap with Inventoried Roadless Area (IRA)

Unit Number	Acres	Treatment	Within IRA
449-30	45	Site prep, plant, and grub	Yes
449-10	9	Site prep, plant, and grub	No
449-14	9	Site prep, plant, and grub	No
450-40	61	Plant and grub	No

(See Project Proposal)

Table 3. Check the Categorical Exclusion category that applies to the project:

For full description of each category and examples refer to FSH 1909.15, Chapter 30. (05/23/2014)					
32.11 Categories Established by the Secretary		32.12 Categories Established by the Chief (CE Case File or DM is not required, but may be recommended)		32.2 Categories (Decision Memo, Comment, and Appeal are Required)	
	7 CFR 1b.3(a)(1)		36 CFR 220.6(d)(1)		36 CFR 220.6(e)(1)
	7 CFR 1b.3(a)(2)		36 CFR 220.6(d)(2)		36 CFR 220.6(e)(2)
	7 CFR 1b.3(a)(3)		36 CFR 220.6(d)(3)		36 CFR 220.6(e)(3)
	7 CFR 1b.3(a)(4)		36 CFR 220.6(d)(4)	√	36 CFR 220.6(e)(5)
	7 CFR 1b.3(a)(5)		36 CFR 220.6(d)(5)		36 CFR 220.6(e)(6)
	7 CFR 1b.3(a)(6)		36 CFR 220.6(d)(6)		36 CFR 220.6(e)(7)
	7 CFR 1b.3(a)(7)		36 CFR 220.6(d)(7)		36 CFR 220.6(e)(8)
			36 CFR 220.6(d)(8)		36 CFR 220.6(e)(9)
			36 CFR 220.6(d)(9)		36 CFR 220.6(e)(11)
			36 CFR 220.6(d)(10)		36 CFR 220.6(e)(12)
					36 CFR 220.6(e)(13)
					36 CFR 220.6(e)(14)
					36 CFR 220.6(e)(15)
					36 CFR 220.6(e)(16)
					36 CFR 220.6(e)(17)
					36 CFR 220.6(e)(18)
					36 CFR 220.6(e)(19)
					36 CFR 220.6(e)(20)
32.3 Categories Established by Statute					

	42 USC 15942 – Energy Act 2005--Oil and Gas Leases
	16 USC 6554 – HFRA – Silvicultural Assessments
	16 U.S.C. 6591b - Section 603 of HFRA – Insect and Disease Infestation
	32.4 Statutory NEPA Exception
	16 USC 6236 – Organization Camp Special Use Authorization

Table 4. Forest Plan Management Area (MA) and Proposal Consistency: List applicable MAs. Check Yes [Y] or No [N] for consistency. Note if in an Inventoried Roadless Area.

Management Area	Pages in the Forest Plan	Acres within Project Area	Percentage of Project area (%)	Y	N
MA – 5 Special Habitat (Late Successional Reserve) (LSRs)	4-82 to 4-89	1,093	100	x	
MA – Riparian Reserves (RRs)	4-106 to 4-114	360 (acreage overlapping LSR land allocation)	32.9	x	
Inventoried Roadless Area**		182 (acreage overlapping LSR land allocation)	16.6	x	

*Page numbers from the July 29th, 2010 version of the Forest Plan. Accessed online at <http://www.fs.usda.gov/main/klamath/landmanagement/planning>.

**An Inventoried Roadless Area Briefing Paper is available for further discussion of treatment within the Crapo Released Roadless Area.

Determination of Extraordinary Circumstances for the Proposal (36 CFR 220.6(a)): The following resource conditions (Table 4) were considered in determining whether extraordinary circumstances related to the proposed action warrant further analysis and documentation in an EA or an EIS^{1,2}:

Resource Conditions	Present? Y / N		If Present, the following Findings are made:	Reference material supporting finding of no extraordinary circumstance:
Proposed, Threatened, or Endangered <u>Terrestrial Wildlife Species</u> or Their Designated or Proposed Critical habitat, or FS sensitive wildlife species		N	No P, T, E or S wildlife species or critical habitats will be <u>adversely</u> affected by this proposal. No extraordinary circumstances exist for this resource condition.	There is no habitat for any wildlife species listed as Proposed, Threatened, Endangered, or Sensitive within the areas proposed for treatment.
Proposed, Threatened, or Endangered <u>Aquatic Species</u> or Their Designated or Proposed Critical habitat, or FS sensitive aquatic species .	Y		No P, T, E or S Fish, Amphibians or Macroinvertebrates or critical habitats will be <u>adversely</u> affected by this proposal. No extraordinary circumstances exist for this resource condition.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The project will have “No Effect” on SONCC coho salmon or SONCC coho Critical Habitat • The project will have “No Effect” for UKT Chinook salmon and SONCC coho salmon Essential Fish Habitat • This project will have no effect on individuals and will not lead to a trend towards listing for Forest Service Sensitive Species
Proposed, Threatened, or Endangered <u>Plant Species</u> or Their Designated or Proposed Critical habitat, or FS sensitive plant species		N	No P, T, E or S plant species will be <u>adversely</u> affected by this action. No extraordinary circumstances exist for this resource condition.	There is no habitat for any botanical species listed as Proposed, Threatened, Endangered, or Sensitive within the areas proposed for treatment.
Floodplains, wetlands or municipal watersheds		N	No floodplains, wetlands or municipal watersheds will be adversely affected by this action. No extraordinary circumstances exist for this resource condition.	

¹ FSH 1909.15 Section 30.3(2).

² The mere presence of one or more of these resource conditions does not preclude use of a categorical exclusion (CE). It is the existence of a cause-effect relationship between a proposed action and the potential effect on these resource conditions, and if such a relationship exists, the degree of the potential effect of a proposed action on these resource conditions that determines whether extraordinary circumstances exist (36 CFR 220.6 (a) (2).

Congressionally designated wilderness, wilderness study areas, or National Recreation Areas		N	No Congressionally designated areas will be <u>adversely</u> affected by this action. No extraordinary circumstances exist for this resource condition.	
Inventoried Roadless Areas	Y		IRAs will not be <u>adversely</u> affected by this action. No extraordinary circumstances exist for this resource condition.	The proposed project maintains the integrity of the IRA by meeting the objectives set forth for the Little North Fork/Crapo LSR including encouraging reforestation to accelerate the development of habitat in both high and moderate intensity burned areas.
Research Natural Areas		N	RNAs will not be <u>adversely</u> affected by this action. OHV use not allowed in wilderness/no routes exist. No extraordinary circumstances exist for this resource condition.	
American Indians and Alaska Native religious or cultural sites		N	Implementation of the Proposed Action would not <u>adversely</u> affect American Indian religious or cultural sites. No extraordinary circumstances exist for this resource condition.	See ASR #R2018-05-05-2430-0
Archaeological sites, or historic properties or areas		N	No archeological sites or sites eligible for National Historic Register listing will be <u>adversely</u> affected by this proposal. No extraordinary circumstances exist for this resource condition.	See ASR #R2018-05-05-2430-0

Biological Evaluations / Assessments:

BE/BA - Wildlife	Done		N/A	X	Determination:	No Effect
BE/BA - Fisheries	Done	X	N/A		Determination:	No Effect
BE/BA - Plants	Done		N/A	X	Determination:	No Effect

Archeological Reconnaissance Report:

ASR Number: #R2018-05-05-2430-0	Done		N/A		Determination:	This project was cleared as a Screened Undertaking under the R5 PA Appendix D, Class 2.3(d and bb)
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Consultation with other agencies and tribes:

FWS: Formal ☐ Informal ☐ by: _____ DATE: _____

Notes: N/A – No Effect – No consultation required.

NMFS: Formal ☐ Informal ☐ by: _____ DATE: _____

Notes: N/A – No Effect – No consultation required.

SHPO: Done ☐ N/A ☒ by: _____ DATE: _____

Notes:

Native Americans: Done ☐ N/A ☒ by: _____ DATE: _____

Notes:

Finding required by other laws:

Law	Compliance Yes or No?		Supporting Information
NFMA	Yes		
National Historic Preservation Act	Yes		See ASR #R2018-05-05-2430-0
Clean Water Act	Yes		[Cat B]
Clean Air Act	Yes		
Endangered Species Act	Yes		No effect. No consultation needed.
Other			

Questions for Consideration	Yes or No?	
Is the project within an Inventoried Roadless Area?	Yes	
Is the project within view of a Wild and Scenic River?		No
Is the project within Wilderness?		No
Is this project within Wildland Urban Interface?		No
Is the project in a Key Watershed?	Yes	
Could Riparian Reserves or Aquatic Conservation Strategy objectives be affected?	Yes	

Scoping: Scoping is required for all proposed actions. Scoping is used to determine if an EA or EIS is needed. Scoping complexity should be commensurate with project complexity [36 CFR 220.6(c), and FSH 1909.15 chapter 30.5]

Check all that apply:

- ☒ The proposed project has been listed in the Schedule of Proposed Environmental Actions.
- ☒ A legal notice of scoping was published in local newspapers.
- ☒ A distribution letter was sent to interested and affected parties, agencies, and tribes.
- ☒ Project was reviewed by an interdisciplinary planning team.

(Attach a list of interested and affected parties, tribes, and agencies contacted.)

Review:

Environmental Coordinator by: Darika Carlson DATE: 2/27/2018

Line Officer approval: I have considered the above listed resource conditions and determined there are no extraordinary circumstances related to the proposed action that warrant further analysis and documentation in an EA or EIS. None of the extraordinary circumstances described in 36 CFR 220.6 (b) exist. I have also considered all other factors listed here and find that all practical means to avoid or minimize environmental harm have been adopted in the design of proposed action.

Line Officer Name/Title: by: [Signature] DATE: 2/27/2018

INTERDISCIPLINARY REVIEW

Instructions: List any known extraordinary circumstances, Forest Plan, or other legal concern that may result in the need for this project to be modified or analyzed under an environmental assessment or environmental impact statement. Provide rationale to support your concern. If there are no extraordinary circumstances, provide rationale to support this conclusion. Reference any supporting documents. (Delete resource specialties that are not required.)

Wildlife [Sam Cuenca]:

Threatened, Endangered, Proposed, and Sensitive Species. No effect. No habitat affected.

Management Indicator Species. No effect. No habitat affected.

Migratory Birds. No effect. No habitat affected.

Initials: SC Date: 12/18/17

Botany [Danika Carlson]:

Noxious Weeds: The Project is proposing activities that require hand work for site preparation and planting, and pile burning of fuels to accomplish project goals. This type of work creates relatively low amounts of ground disturbance. Planting previously burned areas may be beneficial in reducing the amount of available noxious weed habitat within the project area over time as the trees grow and canopy cover increases within planting units. Activities that require soil disturbance for implementation have the potential to create habitat for noxious weed species, however project design features have been incorporated into the proposed action to minimize the potential spread of noxious weed infestations that currently exist within the project area. These project design features will be sufficient to reduce the risk of spreading seeds from the project area to other locations on the forest and will reduce the risk of current infestations within the project area expanding beyond their current boundaries. Implementation of equipment cleaning and weed free materials in the contract will reduce the risk of introduction of new noxious weeds into the project area. **There is a low risk that the Salmon August Reforestation Project will cause the introduction or spread of Klamath National Forest listed noxious weeds.**

Threatened, Endangered, and Proposed Plant Species: The Project is not within the range or habitat of *Arabis macdonaldiana*, *Astragalus applegatei*, *Fritillaria gentneri*, or *Phlox hirsuta*. No federally listed Threatened, Endangered, or Proposed plant species would be affected by this project. There would be no direct, indirect, or cumulative impacts to Threatened, Endangered, or Proposed plant species would be affected by this project. There would be no direct, indirect, or cumulative impacts to Threatened, Endangered, or Proposed plant species. The Salmon August Reforestation Project complies with Section 7 of the Endangered Species Act of 1973, as amended, and Forest Service Policy (FSM 2670).

Sensitive Plant Species:

The Project is not proposing any activities within or directly adjacent to any known sites within the project area, there will be no direct effects from reforestation units. There are no known sites adjacent to or along access routes into any proposed Project units, there will be no indirect effects from reforestation activities. The Salmon August Reforestation Project complies with Forest Service Policy (FSM 2670). The Salmon August Reforestation Project complies with Forest Plan Standards and Guidelines for Sensitive plant species.

Survey and Manage:

The project area has been reviewed for species listed as manage known sites and manage high priority sites (Category B, D, or E) and there are no known sites present in locations that may be affected by project activities. The project area is exempt from Equivalent Effort fungi surveys because ground disturbing activities would not occur in stands defined as old-growth (USDA 2006, 2013a). The Salmon August Reforestation Project complies with the *2001 Record of Decision and Standard and Guidelines for Amendments to the Survey and Manage, Protection Buffer, and other Mitigation Measure Standards and Guidelines*.

Initials: DC Date: 12/19/17

Archaeology [Jeanne Goetz]:

This project was cleared as a Screened Undertaking under the R5 PA Appendix D, Class 2.3(d and bb) - see ASR # R2018-05-05-2430-0. There are no known archaeological sites within the project area; however, if any previously unknown cultural resources are discovered during implementation, notify the district's archaeologist immediately.

No tribal concerns have been identified; no known American Indian religious or cultural sites will be adversely affected by this project.

Initials: JG Date: 2/13/2018

Soils / Geology [Will Trip (Soils) / D. Beal (Geology)]:

There are no soil concerns for this project.

There are no geologic concerns with the proposed actions. The proposed actions should ultimately improve slope stability on slopes where root structures will decay over time as a result of the fire.

Initials: WT/DB Date: 12/13/17 / 12/27/17

Hydrology [Chris Ester]

Proposed activities will have a direct long term positive effect to water quality and watershed processes by causing an increase in stream shading and enhancing slope stability which reduces stream sedimentation. Proposed site preparation activities, particularly pile burning, and within Riparian Reserves could cause a localized negative effect. BMP's designed for minimizing and eliminating this risk will be translated into on the ground prescriptions and applied to proposed actions. There will be no cumulative effects from or to other projects.

CWA Compliance

It was determined by RWB staff that because some proposed actions are taking place within Riparian Reserves the project is Category B eligible under Order No. R1-2015-0021 (the 2015 Waiver). Compliance with the 2015 Waiver in part constitutes compliance with the federal Clean Water Act and full implementation of the Salmon River TMDL for this project. All applicable 2015 Waiver conditions will be followed, detailed with the 2015 Waiver application, and finalized upon enrollment under the 2015 Waiver (following the Decision document for this project). Multiple watershed BMPs and PDFs apply to the project activities to ensure compliance with the 2015 Waiver. These are listed within the waiver application and will be in the decision memo.

Forest Plan Compliance

The project is consistent with the nine ACS objectives as the activities proposed will either maintain or restore those objectives. Determinations and Rationale are listed below for each objective. The bounds for this analysis (particularly regarding which areas will be "restored") are only those riparian areas being proposed for planting.

<u>Objective</u>	<u>Determination</u>	<u>Rationale</u>
1	Partial Restore	Patches of plantation in a severely burned landscape will promote watershed complexity.
2	Will not prevent attainment	The project is not large enough to affect watershed connectivity.
3	Restore	Planting in riparian reserves will increase soil stability which will improve bank and channel stability.
4	Restore	Planting in riparian reserves will both increase stream shading in the short term and cause a more diverse and comprehensive shading in the long term as conifers mature to late seral conditions. This will decrease water temperatures.
5	Partial Restore	Some elements of the sediment regime, namely volume of sediment input will be reduced.
6	Will not prevent attainment	The project will not significantly change in stream flows.
7	Will not prevent attainment	The project will not influence floodplain inundation.
8	Partial Restore	The conifer component of the composition of riparian plants will be more speedily recovered as a result of the project.
9	Will not prevent attainment	All species planted will be native.

Initials: CE Date: 01/04/2018

Fisheries [Andrea McBroom]:

No extraordinary circumstances for fisheries.

- Best Management Practices are expected to ensure that the project will have a less than a significant impact to water quality and due to the distance of fish bearing streams from site preparation activities there will be no direct effect to fish.
- The limited nature of activities in Riparian Reserves near fish bearing streams, implementation of stream buffers and project design features will ensure that there will be no significant impact to water quality.

Direct Effects: Direct Effects are the direct or immediate effects of the Project on the species or its habitat. No causal mechanism to directly effect fish because no instream work is proposed.

Indirect Effects: Indirect Effects are those effects that are caused by or will result from the proposed action and are later in time, but are still reasonably certain to occur. Indirect effects to fish habitat would not occur due to the low proximity of project actions to species/designated habitat and the very low probability of exposure to actions of the project. The implementation of BMP's, the limited nature of the project and project design features will limit any sediment that may be generated from the Project. There will be no indirect effects to anadromous fish or Critical and Essential Fish Habitat.

Determinations:

- The project will have "No Effect" on SONCC coho salmon or SONCC coho Critical Habitat
- The project will have "No Effect" for UKT Chinook salmon and SONCC coho salmon Essential Fish Habitat
- This project will have no effect on individuals and will not lead to a trend towards listing for Forest Service Sensitive Species
- This project will not impact habitat or change existing conditions for aquatic MIS species

Please see the complete fisheries report, "Aquatic Management Indicator Species and Biological Assessment/Evaluation For Threatened, Endangered, and Proposed Anadromous Fish Species That may be affected by the Salmon-August Complex Reforestation." (McBroom, 2018)

Initials: AM Date: 2/20/2018

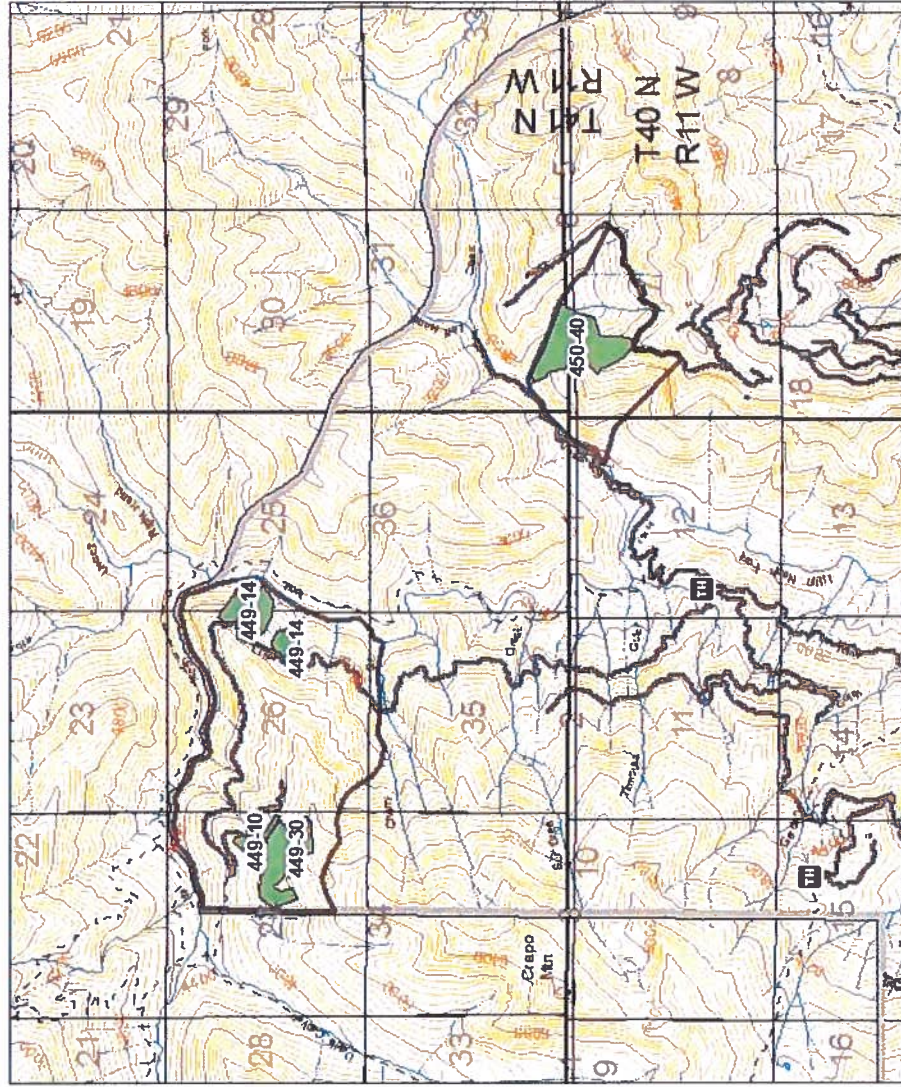
Air Quality [Danika Carlson]:

All burning activities will adhere to pertinent air quality regulations. Burning will occur in accordance with an approved burn plan and an approved Smoke Management Plan that includes a Smoke Permit approved by the Siskiyou County Air Pollution Control District.

Initials: DC Date: 2/27/2018



Salmon August Reforestation Project
Salmon/Scott River Ranger District
Klamath National Forest



Legend

- Reforestation Units
- Project Boundary
- Wilderness Boundary



0 0.25 0.5 1 Miles

12/4/2017

Table 5. Project design features categorized by resource.

PDF Title	Description	Applicable Units
Bot-1	Avoid parking equipment and vehicles in weed-infested locations.	Entire Project Area
Bot-2	Equipment will be cleaned of soil, seeds, vegetative matter, and other debris that could contain or hold seeds prior to moving to the project area, after operating within an area with a known site, and after leaving the project area.	Entire Project Area
Bot-3	The Project will be monitored the 2 nd and 3 rd years after implementation to determine Project Design Feature effectiveness and to quickly respond to any spreading/newly introduced infestations.	Entire Project Area
WS-10	Hand piles will be placed in a checkerboard pattern whenever possible (not one pile directly above another). Hand piles will be six feet or less in diameter.	449-10, 449-14, 449-30
WS-11	Burn piles will not be placed within 30 feet of perennial stream channels greater than one foot wetted width, or within 15 feet of intermittent streams.	449-10, 449-14, 449-30
WS-12	Within Riparian Reserves, prescribed fire effects will mimic a low intensity backing fire and ignition will usually not occur there. Hand piles may have higher fire intensity in order to consume pile material.	449-10, 449-14, 449-30
WS-14	Site preparation activities of cutting and piling of small diameter (less than 12" dbh) dead conifers and dead hardwoods, live or dead brush, and slashing of standing dead material (greater than 15" db) will be excluded from intermittent and perennial channels for a distance of 10 feet on either side of the center of the active channel. Small pockets of light vegetation removal within this exclusion buffer may be permissible for strategic individual tree planting.	449-10, 449-14, 449-30
Watershed pdfs apply to BMP 6.3 – Protection of Water Quality from Prescribed Burn Effects: To maintain soil productivity; minimize erosion; and minimize ash, sediment, nutrients, and debris from entering water bodies.		